



Hi, <<First Name>>!

My guest this week was coach and athlete Ian Torrence.

You can connect with Ian.

1. on his blog [Reinventing the Run](#)
2. on his iRunFar.com column [Bag of Tricks](#)
3. where he coaches with [McMillan Running](#)
4. at the race he directs, the [Stagecoach Line 100 Mile Ultra & Relay](#)
5. and on [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#)

Ian's training is race-based, which means that he uses races as his primary training and spends most of the time between races working on recovery and maintenance. He said that he now considers an 8-mile run to be a good day in his training, and his plan is unstructured.

He emphasized that training for ultra endurance does not need to be exhaustive. Although the events may be arduous, training does not need to be extreme in volume. It is important to consider all the stresses in life as potential factors in fatigue, and rest time needs to be a focal point just as much as your workouts.

Like so many other interviewees, Ian stressed the importance of keeping a training diary. His athletes color code workouts with red (hard, rough, bad), yellow (ok), and green (good, great). If there are a few reds in a week, then they consider backing off a bit. You might try implementing this in your own training diary.

A general training plan that is tailored and tweaked to each athlete begins with the goal race and works backwards...we've heard this before from other

coaches, too.

3-2 weeks out from the goal race is the peaking (aka, tapering) phase: back off on volume but keep intensity up.

10-2 weeks out from the goal race is where he would emphasize the demands of the event by incorporating race specific terrain, climbs, speed, etc. into the workouts.

16-10 weeks out from the goal race is the time to work on weaknesses that are important for the event (like hills or speed).

Although Ian will help his athletes train by heart rate if they prefer that, he has found that training by ratings of perceived exertion (RPE) is the best approach for trail runners.

One of the most enlightening parts of the interview for me was when Ian said, "It's acceptable to DNF (for any reason). And, I think that's the first thing people need to understand when they do DNF is, it's OK. Your self-worth is not measured by whether you finish or whether you stop. A lot of people think it is; people think that people have a different view of you if you stop, that you give up and you can't do it and that's kind of what, when you DNF, you think other people are thinking. But, I can guarantee you that most people don't even have the courage to start the race." Figure out the reasons for the DNF, set appropriate new goals, and keep moving forward.

Wrap-up question

1. What are the biggest mistakes Ian sees in athletes' training?

ANSWER: First, doing too much. People tend to overtrain. Staying too long outside of your comfort zone without recovery leads to injury and burnout. Second, repeating the training you did in the past and expecting it work the same again. Ian says that you don't need as much training to perform similarly as you gain experience and fitness over seasons and years. If you continue to increment, push, and take on more and more over the years, you will deteriorate rather than improve. Instead, you should be able to reduce and focus training, and have success.

1. What should athletes do more often?

ANSWER: First, respect the stress-recovery balance...recover more. Second, strength train and find cross-training pursuit that you enjoy.

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All the Best,

Shawn

Chief Running Officer, [Science Of Ultra](#)

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